

## **EELS (family Anguillidae)**

### **American eel**

*Anguilla rostrata*



**Similar Species:** None

**Identification:** Smooth body (“slippery as an eel”), dorsal (back) fin continues into tall fin and around bottom of body.

The American eel is a unique fish that spawns in the Atlantic Ocean, but adults live and grow in North American rivers that flow into this ocean. They are seldom collected in South Dakota, and their movement up the Missouri River was stopped by the construction of Gavins Point Dam. Large females rarely exceed 30 to 40 inches and 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 pounds. Males seldom exceed 24 inches. Adult American eels are voracious carnivores. Although they will feed on carrion, eels primarily seek living prey.

